

film art

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film art

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AUTUMN
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EDITORIAL

Amidst the din and dust raised by television, the latest rebirth of colour, and problematic stereoscopy, a far more revolutionary influence on the future of the film has established itself quietly. After forty years it has been realized that a film is a film, even if it is projected outside a "Picture Palace," and to an audience of two instead of two thousand. Films that ignore theatrical distribution are now made commercially.

The lateness of this simple discovery is a monument to mental habit. Projectors without picture palaces were regarded as carts without horses. The makers of substandard apparatus advertise projectors very rarely; when they are mentioned it is in a footnote, as an accessory for showing "your own movies" only. Yet for a long time Pathescope has brought into thousands of homes the best work of the Golden Age of German films, the early Chaplins, and Felix. More have seen these in their own homes than have seen them in the commercial cinemas, and more will see them in the future. The substandard libraries can profitably become the repertory cinemas. For every one person who wishes to and can afford to make his own films there are a thousand who wish to and can afford to see other people's.

Films like *Siegfried* and *The Spy* cannot be made for home consumption without bankruptcy. But the existence of portable apparatus has made commercially possible the manufacture of non-theatrical films, depending on skill more than spectacle, for distribution to scattered audiences over a long period. From the Empire Marketing Board, and the pioneering work of Kino, have grown the products of the G.P.O. Film Unit, the Gas, Light and Coke Co.'s films, the Western Electric road shows, and innumerable films that advertise in the literal, and best, sense. It is ignorant to sneer at the commercial origin of these films. Not Shell-Mex only benefits by *The Birth of the Robot*. The general public is the richer for Len Lye.

In actual fact, the studios, especially in Hollywood, have always been quick to recognize outside talent. There is no doubt as to the competency, and more, of the technicians. The main fault is that things not worth doing are done extremely well. Even in routine jobs like News Reels, the manufacture of implications shows a thoroughly practical acquaintance with the most advanced ideas in constructive editing. It is not surprising that the studio technicians have welcomed the advent of the non-theatrical film, for it opens to them fields of activity in which they can use their abilities with self respect. Significant is the fact that, in America, the Society of Motion Picture Engineers is initiating co-operation with the amateur groups, both for production and distribution.

The theatrical film itself has taken notice of the commercial success of films distributed beyond its borders, and has realized that there are times when

the public is not brooding over the one theme presented to it. Whatever may be the merits of *The Prisoner of Shark Island*, *Pasteur*, *Green Pastures*, *Mutiny on the Bounty*, *Things to Come*, *Fury*, *The Man Who Could Work Miracles*, these films show the tendency to exploit a wider range of human interests. So also is there an increase of the types of film shown. Cartoons are established, though the styles and themes are stereotyped, and the explicit use of models and puppets growing. In a few years we may achieve the wide range covered by the pre-war and wartime short films.

With this has come a recognition of the film as an instrument. Films for scientific and technical purposes have become more of a matter of course. A member of our staff used a film to illustrate a paper at the International Congress of Mathematicians, for the first time in its history. But only a trickle of more or less educational films reach the schools. The producer is here in the position of a publisher who prints a text book, of which only one copy is required by each school. He can make it pay only by confining himself to talkies, refusing to sell films outright, and collecting the profits on the sale of apparatus and the hire of films. This debars the use of films as permanent pieces of lecture apparatus. In America this position is alleviated by the recognition of the existence of the cinemas by the great universities. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, for instance, is preparing a series of fifteen films on electrotechnics.

Some thousands of years ago methods of making marks on surfaces were discovered. We have just discovered how to make moving marks on surfaces. To lay down a law for the use of the latter method is no less foolish than to lay down a law for the use of the former, which is applied to things so different as etchings and books, wallpapers and maps. The cinematographic method may well have as rich a future. FILM ART will endeavour to foreshadow its applications, and judge its achievements with reference to their intentions.

The use of electron cameras in television suggests that, in the not too remote future, the cameraman will achieve his dream of a lens that will intensify the light that passes through it. The electron camera converts the visual image into a bundle of electric currents resembling the beam of light from a magic lantern (except that the rays are not straight, but like corkscrews). This beam can be manipulated in any way by powerful magnets. In particular it can start off a similar, but more powerful, beam, and this can start off another, and so on. The final results can be converted into wireless signals or recorded pictures. Thus electricity replaces optics. A camera working on this principle has been made by André Lallemand, and was described to the Academie des Sciences in July. As it needs six thousand volts for operation, its use is confined to an astronomical observatory.

ON FILM CRITICISM

*
L. J. JORDAAN

There are, especially in Holland, many so-called film lovers who are in reality film haters. They are those who, proud of the intellectual superiority, arising from the theories and constructions conceived in their super-brains, confine themselves to discussing, in a selected circle, a film art which in reality is non-existent, and who, from this elevated standpoint, deny all progress to the commercial cinema. These intellectual phantasts are the remnants of the *avant-garde* period, but together they are not numerous enough to fill the smallest theatres. They make use of the privilege, available in Holland for the asking, of filling papers and publications with meaningless nonsense, only understood by themselves, which completely ignores the great public interested in the cinema. More important still, the greater part of Dutch film reviews are written by intellectuals who have no contact whatsoever with the reading public for whom they should be writing. There is a shortage of true criticism that devotes its attention to the intelligent (not intellectual) filmgoer, and too little film journalism that keeps pace with the development of real film art. Thus the truly good film has to fight its way to the public between Scylla and Charybdis: on the one side there is the incomprehensible literary penmanship regarding films which, in reality, are quite simple to understand, while on the other hand we have the senseless, senile journalese, originating from the *pre-avant-garde* days, which confines itself to Hollywood scandal and publicity tittle-tattle.

It is remarkable that this state is found only in Holland, and to a lesser extent in England, too. The Dutch public have always had too much reverence for the learnings of the intellectual school, and high-brow criticism is the last thing the cinema, which has fought its way up from the lowest level of public amusement (and which, by the way, is of an eminently modern tendency), is in need of. What is required is a better, but not snobbish public.

Translated from the Dutch by JOHN C. MOORE.

* L. J. Jordaan is to the Dutch cinema what the late Louis Delluc was to the French cinema. For many years now he has been the leading critic in Holland. He started his career on the *Amsterdam Life*, but is best known for his discussions on the cinema in *De Groene Amsterdammer*, the Dutch *New Statesman*. He was the founder of the Dutch *Film Liga* and edited the official organ of this organisation. He is the author of a book, *Thirty Years Film*, published by Brusse.



Three "stills" from the sugar cane sequence in the film which Irene Nicholson and Bryan Montagu are making in Trinidad for the "Trinidad Guardian."

Top right: A scene on the St. Madeline Estate.

Top left: Miss Mohamit, an Indian who takes the part of a labourer in the cane fields.

Lower picture: Miss Ursula Johnson, an Indo-Chinese, who joined the cast at the last moment, is the "discovery" of the film.

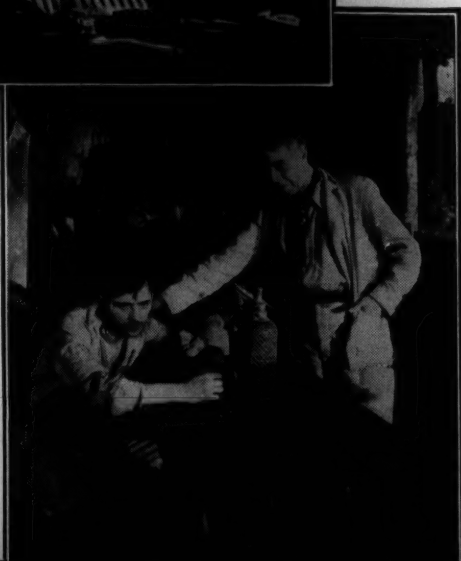


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SOUND FILM ELEMENTS

AND THEIR SYNTHESIS

JAMES HARRIS

Primitive film editing was the act of cutting out the bad bits from a continuous reel of celluloid. Later came the practice of film construction, of building up a film from elements; but the nature of the elements has always been in dispute. Theorists thought variously in terms of

The shot,
The frame,
The difference between the frames.

All these are tenable; most tenable when taken together as three sorts of unit which the editor may use in building his film, but they are not exclusive, or film construction would be as easy as dominoes. Also they are difficult to define. The shot, after all, is merely a convenient editor's conception. It is a piece of film exposed at one running of the camera, and a panning or trucking shot may be equivalent to several fixed camera shots. To the editor the shot has length in feet, to the audience in seconds.

The frame is just a still photograph, a two-dimensional image, with an unalterable duration of about one twenty-fourth of a second. The "difference between the frames" theory arose from the discovery of montage. Within the shot the difference between the frames gives movement, but this montage is performed automatically by the camera, and so it is pedantic to consider frames and the difference between them as the essential elements of construction. What the film editor selects are primarily the shots, their length and density, and the difference between the terminal frames of adjacent shots. But these ideas cannot be extended to sound film.

Sound montage inevitably differs from mute montage. There is the anatomical reason, absence of earlids, which makes quick cutting in sound more unnatural than quick cutting in visuals. The fundamental reason is dimensional. The moving screen image has two dimensions of space and one of time in which to display outline and detail, whereas the sound image has but a single dimension, and must occupy much of it (time) to display complexity. A visual image of a locomotive can be established in two frames, an aural image takes several seconds. There can be no direct collision between sound images on account of their size in the time direction, their length on the sound track, but there can be interaction between simultaneous aural and visual images, and this is true sound film montage.

Sound has a further difference from the photographed image, lack of precision. For example, train noises can express:

"Train."

"Train starting or stopped."

"Train passing close by" (Döppler effect).

"Train in tunnel, or crossing steel bridge, etc."

but never

"Pullman train passing from left to right through wheatlands at dawn."

Even the use of verbal description will not give very great precision. Words are generalizations.

In practice this lack of precision is extremely valuable, since it leaves scope for the imagination in a way which is impossible in the visual, except in cartoon work. The photographed image cannot generalize, and sometimes we want to generalize, or to modify a detailed statement by the addition of a generalization. The use of simultaneously projected sound and visuals is similar to the use of double exposure in silent film, but is superior in that it is less obtrusive as a technical trick. (The spectator should not be made aware of technique.)

Now reconsider the classical theory of montage. According to Eisenstein, in 1930, montage is "an idea that arises in the collision of two pieces independent of one another." Good, but where does this collision take place?

Not in the projector,

Not on the screen,

but in the mind of the spectator.

Not between pieces of celluloid,

Not between pictures,

but between a memory and a picture, between all memory and a new experience.

Reaction to a new experience depends upon the subject's previous experience. New ideas can arise from the impact of a new image upon those stored in the mind. In experiencing a film a new image will react most strongly with the image which is most vividly in the mind, i.e., the previous shot, and this is the basis of classical montage. The effect of any shot must depend upon the whole of the subject's previous experience, the earlier part of the film being a part of that experience, and the only part of it over which the film director has control. The audience inevitably learns to associate a certain voice with a certain character, as in real life, but other less obvious associations can be built up. Consider Clair's use of music in *A Nous la Liberté* to carry the mind back to earlier scenes, emphasizing the parallel between factory and prison, and in the second "cut fingers" scene, suggesting the thoughts of the characters by

producing those thoughts in the mind of the spectator. The aural flash back is much more satisfactory than the technically obtrusive flash back of the silent days. The spectator feels that he has understood, and not that something has been forced on his attention.

Visual images also have their association values, but these have received little attention, because they are always taken for granted. (The star system makes us associate a character with his acts in previous films.)

The editor's units of sound film construction must be those of the silent film, together with complete natural sound and dialogue shots, words, sound images and abstract sounds (music). In scenario construction we can get nearer to fundamentals. The film editor cannot separate or alter the relation between different images which have been photographed together. It is only in the scenario and shooting that fundamental units can be dealt with, and unwanted and extraneous stimuli to the mind of the audience eliminated.

We can take as the unit of sound film scenario construction any image or symbol, visual or aural, which presents a complete concept to the mind. That is, a unit of the magnitude of a precise word, as in an Australian aboriginal language, or a noun with attendant adjectives in a more vague civilized language. These units have to be built up with regard to their mutual relationships, movement, time, size and angle of shooting, with regard to the form and tempo of the whole (which is in the sphere of study of the musician), and always with regard to the probable common previous experience of the audience for whom the film is intended. Thus the film maker can conduct the minds of his audience along a certain path, and direct their trains of thought by using his images both as stimuli and limits to the imagination. For their money he gives them a controlled dream.

●

The Marquis de Casa Maury has just returned from a visit to the Continent and has obtained some interesting films for presentation at the Curzon Cinema, Mayfair. The first one is *Savoy Hotel* 217, under the direction of Gustav Ucicky (of *Refugees*) and with camera-work by Fritz Arno Wagner. This will be followed by *Mayerling*, *Revolt at Sea* and Willi Forst's *Mazurka*, mentioned in FILM ART No. 8. He has also secured *Golgotha*, but a special L.C.C. license will be required before it can be shown.

— — —

Herman G. Weinberg, who used to run the *Little Theatre*, Baltimore, for the showing of worthwhile films, will shortly open the *Filmarte Theatre*, 202 West 58th Street, New York City, encouraging interest in good pictures there. American filmgoers will be able to obtain their copy of FILM ART in the lobby.

— — —

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Hollywood, has sent us an up-to-date list of the publications, periodicals and pamphlets in their library. It is doubtful whether we have in England anything with which to compare it, and credit is due to the Governors for keeping a minute record of the development of the cinema and encouraging investigation.

PSYCHOPATHIA CINEMA SEXUALIS

HERMAN G. WEINBERG

"Bela Balazs bezeichnet die Erotik als das eigenste Filmthema, als den Filmstoff an sich."

CURT MORECK, Sittengeschichte des Kinos.

"Despite dull theories of pedants to the contrary, who are ever in search of a subtile, abstract 'esthetic', sensuality is the main ingredient in all art that counts, just as it is the essential urge in every manifestation of life."

C. J. BULLIET, The Courtesan Olympia.

"The movie was born in the laboratory and reared in the counting-house."¹ Filthy hands taught it to walk. Since then, it has been obsessed with sex—not in the manner of Wedekind, Strindberg and O'Neill (or in a lighter vein, of Aristophanes, Schnitzler or Shaw), but of Edith M. Hull, Elinor Glyn and Faith Baldwin, of *True Story Magazine*, Saturday night in a country road-house, and a penny arcade peep-show. That is the counting-house influence. The movie expanded enormously as an industry during the past two decades, but its potentialities as an art-form, though astonishingly great, were never realized at its parturition, hence it never enjoyed a healthy youth, substituting for this a gawky period of adolescence. Lacking a normal childhood, symbolised by the mellow growth of primitive music, sculpture and painting, the movie passed from puking infancy to smart-alecky adolescence. When it found it had a voice grafted to it by the laboratory, it began to talk. But it was the voice of a televox and it gave forth sterile blabberings. Back to infancy! Then to the counting-house again! And now that the "talkies" have reached THEIR gawky period of adolescence, we are back where we were a decade ago. But the roundelay is not finished. The laboratory has color and the third-dimension to graft to it yet. The same cycle will be repeated in both these advents. And when we shall finally be vouchsafed the rather dubious enjoyment of three-dimensional-color-talking-films on the televisior-screens in our homes, a new height in ineptitude will have been reached for future generations to aim at.

To-day, the movie industry is an imbecile giant possessed of a miraculous toy. It is as if the invention of the microscope was arrived at for the sole purpose of enlarging anatomical details of smutty postcards. The movie's role in education, science, sociology and esthetic principles has become so minimized as to be recognized only by a few. Esthetically it is on a par with that other miraculous toy, the radio, the latter representing, in America, at any rate, the most flagrant misuse of a medium for the dissemination of culture in our time.

¹ Harry Alan Potamkin ("The Eyes of the Movie"—1934).

And so with the American movie, for it is of Hollywood that we have been speaking.

The Hollywood of the voluptuous musical extravaganzas in which the cameras revel like satyrs among nymphs, the eye of the camera leering among flying legs, torsos and dentific smiles, this onanistic ballet of irises and flowers composed of breasts and hair, in the midst of which a Junoesque brunette sings a torch song, very sentimental, about love, to the cascades of augmented tin-pan-alley orchestrations . . . swooning ecstasies, gushing tonal shudders, a rolling-mill operating full blast for the amusement of vacuous audiences. Sculptured thighs with dimpled knees brush the camera lens, the whilst a bevy of girls, who have stripped themselves to the Tropic of Cancer and the Equator for \$7.50 per day and a voyeuristic spree, droop their lovely shoulders, each after the other, so that the camera may catch the erotic shadow between their breasts as it passes. The dancers whirl and spin, they become moist and exhausted, but only their ultimate collapse will show this, until the logical conclusion of this orgiastic display is the subconscious foray of rapine which the spectators commit with their eyes, leaving the set a shambles of loins, bruised and empty, of mouths drained of their honey, tired bodies wanting only to sleep . . . this is the condition in which the conclusion of the film finds them. This simulation of *post coitus animal triste* is the narcotic that dulls the sensibility of frustration. They leave the theatre, tired but happy. Hollywood has triumphed again! Imagination has triumphed over matter! Another of this series of exhibitionistic displays is well on its way to earn a fortune for its producers, which is, no doubt, as it should be, since the movie is an "entertainment for the masses," and these masses are quick to recognize the screen's peculiar and undeniable genius for erotic stimulation.

There are myriads of tendencies in this genre. From the streetwalker's invitation to "come up and see me sometime," appropriated with the several accompanying gestures and inflections from the province of the burlesque show and the bawdy house, which Mae West had adopted, to the "gather-ye-rosebuds-while-ye-may" stares that Clark Gable and Jean Harlow give each other in some such opus as *Wife vs. Secretary* (the scene on the bed in a Havana hotel), the American movie has run the gamut of the sex-lexicon from "A" to "B," as Dorothy Parker would say. Though every American movie, whether there is any integral connection with its plot or not, deals in a routine manner with the great American formula, to wit: "Boy meets Girl—Boy loses Girl—Boy gets Girl," there have been few movies which have dealt with love itself, the passion isolated, as A. B. Walkley once said of the novel *Ariane*: "Pinned down and examined under the microscope, Love itself is rarely their subject; they do not 'treat it,' they only use it. It . . . sets wedding bells ringing or defies the law or brings bright swords flashing out of scabbards or provokes a hearty laughter from the mob . . ."

Of course, there are exceptions. The film is too sensitive a medium not to have influenced a few directors who brought a worldly intelligence to it, such as Ernst Lubitsch, Harry d'Arrast, King Vidor, Malcolm St. Clair, Erich von

Stroheim, Rene Clair, E. A. Dupont, Fedor Ozep, Murnau, Stiller, etc. In such well remembered films as *The Marriage Circle*, *Laughter*, *The Big Parade*, *The Grand Duchess and the Waiter*, *The Merry Widow* (silent version), *July 14*, *Variety*, *Karamazov*, *Sunrise*, *Hotel Imperial*, etc. But the fake morality tutored by the Hays organization in Hollywood and the insane confusions and inconsistencies of the various censorship bodies have served to stifle all but these few isolated examples of a sophisticated approach to "dat ole debbil" sex in the movie. As Cabell once pointed out, censorship has enforced subtlety upon the artist, to his and the public's own advantage. But this same censorship has also nipped many intelligent films in the bud, so to speak, and has sent the scales down heavily weighted with hypocritic oaths, righteous indignations, and "holier-than-thou" attitudes.

One of the most incisive comments on censorship as it concerns morals was sent to me by Dr. Henry Stack Sullivan, former director of clinical research at the Sheppard Pratt Hospital, anent the Soviet film, *The Village of Sin*. One can generalise Dr. Sullivan's remarks and wander hardly a step away from the essential truth of the matter:

"... Only to a sheltered imbecile or to a pathetically warped mortal (needing protection from others)—to such, only, would the 'sexual' material in *The Village of Sin* come as a shock. The notion that there is anything degrading and/or corrupting to morals in the dramatization of a lustful old man, the father of a family, seems to me to reflect either (a) singular experiences and/or desires in the case of the holder or (b) a conception of the adolescent mind so preposterous as to argue an extraordinary childhood and adolescence. Being 'shocked' by *The Village of Sin* would, to my way of thinking, be in itself a demonstration of hypocritic sexual obsession, hysteria, or a degree of detachment from reality far from mental health...."

This film, it will be recalled, was originally banned by the Maryland State Board of Censors on charge of "immorality." I could substitute, for *The Village of Sin*, the names of dozens of equally meritorious films that had an adult and civilized approach to sex to which the censorial shears have been applied and to which Dr. Sullivan's above remarks would as aptly apply.

Between the bans of such an idiotic censorship that cannot discriminate between a serious, or even witty, but always honest approach to the subject and the pseudo-pornographic approach, and the sexual obsession of the Hollywood movie itself, we have a condition of hopelessness as regards the possibility of a *Madame Bovary* of the screen, an *Ariane* or a *Bel Ami*.

We shall have to be content with the occasional exception to an otherwise set rule—a *Three Women* (the early Lubitsch film), a *Trouble in Paradise*, a *Crime Without Passion*, a *Devil is a Woman*, or a *Dreaming Mouth* (the Elisabeth Bergner film)—which, in themselves show, only too clearly, which way the movie could have gone if it had the right upbringing.

And it would have made just as much money.

JORIS IVENS IN AMERICA

Since FILM ART No. 4 the Editors have not been in touch with Joris Ivens. At the request of the Film Societies, who show a great interest in his work, we have been endeavouring to get in touch with him for the past few months. At the time of going to press we are in possession of some up-to-date information, furnished by Miss Helene van Dongen, who for many years has been closely associated with his work. She was assistant on his *Zuiderzee* film (1930) and was responsible for the sound of *Philips-Radio* (1931). She went with him to the U.S.S.R. and studied *montage* for 18 months, and now has accompanied him to the United States.

She writes:

At the invitation of the "New Film Alliance," Joris Ivens left Europe for America. The first showings of his films *Rain*, *Symphonie Industrielle*, *Komsomol*, *Borinage* and *New Earth* were organized in New York, and the director introduced them personally. The films met with great success and received a good press. Richard Watts, the well-known critic of the "New York Herald," wrote: "They are remarkable and exciting films. Joris Ivens is a director with ideas and imagination. His work demands attention." Under the influence of the *Borinage* film, the "New York Times" draws a parallel between the work of van Gogh and Ivens. "The National Board of Review" awarded them its highest distinction: "Exceptional and outstanding in their fields."

In addition, Ivens lectured at the University of New York on "The Development of Independent Film Art."

He left New York for Hollywood at the end of May at the invitation of the "Directors' and Actors' Guild," and on his way there shows were arranged at Dartmouth College, Buffalo, Washington and Detroit.

In July a performance of all Ivens' films took place at the "Film Art Theatre," Hollywood. Many well-known personalities such as King Vidor, Milestone and Sternberg were present. The showing of his films, which are naturally in stark contrast with the normal Hollywood productions (because Ivens always uses reality so much in dramatising his subjects), provoked a discussion at the "Screen Writers' Guild," where one of the directors expressed himself as follows:—

"We walked away after the showing, knowing as never before that the direction of a film must be done by lovers of life into the labyrinthian vistas of reality. This Mr. Ivens made clear to those who work in the film and to those who go to it for relation to actuality. Yet, within this completely realised actuality, he found opportunity to use the æsthetic of film art. Here was beauty and horror, drabness and ecstasy, tremendous strength and isolation, living in the juxtaposed contiguity which is so fabulous in our own day. These elements he chose and ordered out of ten years

of living antagonism between man and man and man and nature and then finally man and man again, and composed them into a work of life and a work of art. . . ."

Translated from the Dutch by JOHN C. MOORE.

EDITORIAL NOTE:

The American interest in Joris Ivens' work was so great that the "Museum for Modern Art" in New York (which has a special cinema department) have added the films *Rain* and *New Earth* to their library.

●

PORTRAIT OF JOHN KEATS

IDEA FOR A SCENARIO

FRANK JACKSON

Lovely sky and trees. Pan down tall trees, mottled bark. At the foot of the trees is a young girl in peasant costume seated in a tin bath. A fat old woman peers through the trees and advances to the bath, now full of coal. She shovels the coal into a chamber pot. Then wipes her fat, dirty hands and walks off.

She walks up a neat garden path into a respectable villa. A second later she appears at a window and throws out of it a large golden candlestick. This falls into the flowerbed.

Along comes a dear old lady with a huge pair of shears. She brushes a flower carefully with a toothbrush, then cuts it up with shears. Close up of the candlestick lying in the flowerbed on a little baby doll.

The old dear picks up the doll, cuts its head off and drops it into a dustbin. A curate with a long false nose watches her from behind a wall, and when she has gone, sneaks up to the dustbin and, licking his chops, pulls out a brassiere and a bar of chocolate.

He races off down the road. Passes a gallows which he salutes by two somersaults.

The curate places the brassiere and the chocolate at the foot of a tree, rubs his hands and blows a large whistle. A policeman and the two ladies appear. The policeman unravels a huge net. He winds up the girl in it, puts in heavy stones and throws it into the lake. The ripples widen, the policeman laughs. Hands clap. A King sits on a throne and falls through.

PRINTED SCENARIOS

ADRIAN BRUNEL

A script that is undeveloped and unelaborated technically is usually pleasanter reading than a good technical script. Many script-writers realize this, and in order to please their producers, who are generally incapable of the concentration necessary for a proper understanding of the perfect technical script, present a readable script rather than a shootable script. It is better salesmanship.

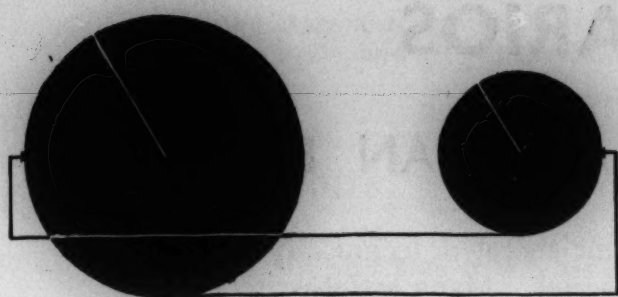
A shooting script should be visualised and written in such detail that it is an almost exact description of the finished sections of celluloid as assembled by the editor. Such a script could easily run to 750 scenes or more. Most producers throw a fit at the mere sight of a script having over 350 script scenes. The general practice, therefore, is for the director to be given a script which he, and ultimately the editor, split up into double the number of scheduled scenes.

One of the reasons that a satisfactory compromise in script form has not yet been arrived at, is that scenarios are typed. The typewriter is not as plastic as the hand inscriber or the printing machine, with their italics, coloured inks and different sizes of print.

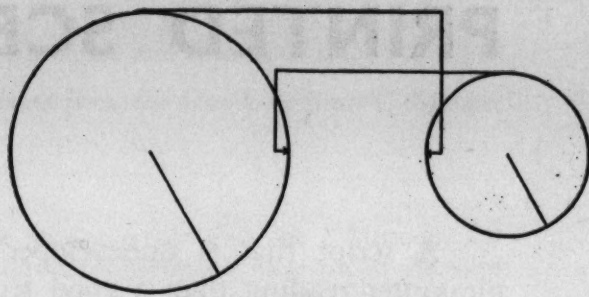
I have evolved more than one script form for printing, the basis being in the relegation of much of the technical part of it to the margins, so that a non-technical reader can read it without difficulty.

I have not yet seen a really readable printed scenario. H. G. Wells' elaborate treatments are certainly readable, but they are not technical scripts. I am in favour of fine writing in a good technical script. I do not think that the script-writer should content himself with bald descriptions of the action, leaving the director to elaborate and interpret as he pleases. He should project himself into the minds of his characters and let us know what they are thinking and feeling. He should explain and justify their actions. In this way the artists can form a clearer impression of the characterisations. There is still plenty of room for elaboration and individual interpretation by artists and director.

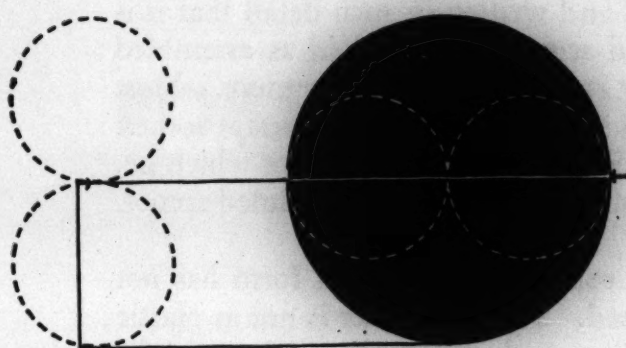
I foresee the day, when a suitable script form has been adopted and authors will take the trouble to study film technique, that film scripts will be published in greater numbers than plays are to-day, and I think it is quite possible that some of them may be "best sellers."



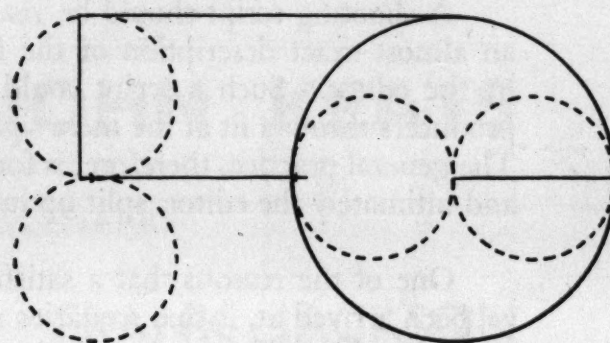
30°



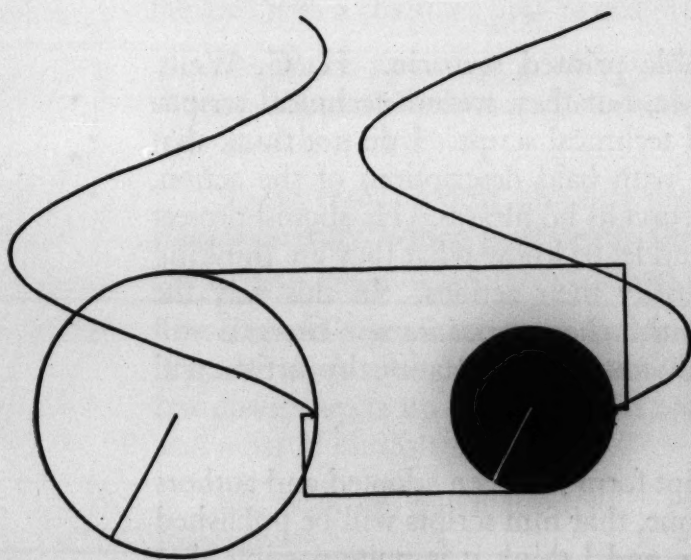
210°



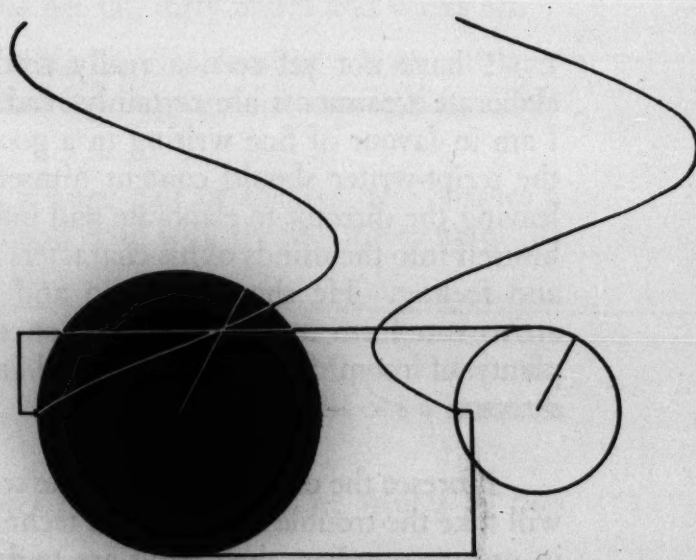
90°



270°



150°



330°

$X + X = O$

Abstract film by Robert Fairthorne and Brian Salt

ABSTRACT FILMS

AND THE MATHEMATICIANS

ROBERT FAIRTHORNE

THESEUS. "The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them."

HIPPOLYTA. "It must be your imagination then, and not theirs."

Midsummer Night's Dream. Act 5. Scene 1.

If abstract films really are abstract films, and there is some doubt about it in practice, they deal exclusively with those abstract relations that can be expressed in terms of shape and motion. Anything else is a by-product. Now for many thousands of years a type of mind has been concentrating on problems of abstract relations, considered as abstract relations and nothing else. To this type of mind, when it is professionally engaged, three elephants and three economic depressions are the same, because of the relation of "threeness." The respects in which they differ—and even mathematicians know that they do differ—have nothing to do with this abstract relation. And so it is with the other abstractions they deal with. Since they have been at it without interruption for over two thousands of years, one would reasonably assume that they knew more about it than most, and that therefore successful abstract films have been made by disguised mathematicians. Another conclusion, and in most cases the true one, is that abstract films are not abstract at all. It is not possible to film an abstraction, you must have something from which to abstract, and this something is what is shown on the screen. The spectator clothes it in whatever his mind prefers, just as he does to cracks on the ceiling and inkblots, and likes or dislikes the result for reasons that have more to do with the psychologist than the expert in abstractions. In this way it is possible to make a film of definite abstract or mathematical intent, which would be at the same time dangerously obscene! The combination of moving patterns, sounds, and oratory is capable of causing riots and lynching parties, in the hands of a competent psychologist.

But this is only three parts of the truth. Abstract films can be, and have been, appreciated for their abstraction alone. Terence White (FILM ART No. 8) is not fantastic when he suggests a ballet to represent the growth of ideas in Hegel's "Logic." Nor is it necessary that the audience should be able to formulate the ideas verbally in order to enjoy it. A mathematical film can be enjoyed by an audience that knows nothing of formal mathematics, a science that is, in its early stages, mainly a question of notation. If the relations are expressed as motion, the need for the notation (X's and all that) disappears.

At the end of the season a film called "Euclid 1.32" was shown to the North London Film Society, and was spontaneously applauded. Yet Mr. Salt made the film purely as an aid to teachers and students. The reason for its

popularity was that it showed, in terms of motion, a clear-cut progress of ideas, of relations. A drama, whose elements were lines in motion, that came to a definite climax. In fact, a visual epigram.

Now if Mr. Salt's film has been projected backwards, or in any other order, it would have become just a movement of lines. How many abstract or pattern films pay this respect to dramatic form or "story"? Many of them would be unaltered in essentials if the cutter were to cut them into short lengths, and play dominoes with them. "Euclid 1.32" owed much to the originator of the theorem it represented. The play of argument observed in Euclid bears a strong structural resemblance, hitherto unnoticed, to that of the Limerick.

CINEMA ART

OSWELL BLAKESTON

Thousands now seeing films never will.

It's easy to talk of success because it has some technique. Mistakes just happen. That is why critics avoid getting down to the business of saying what is wrong with movies, and evolve a "permanent" theory round certain successful films which were essentially transitional.

Laughton is better than Jannings. He moves twice as quickly.

If only the people making documentary cinema didn't worry so much about giving their opinions, but bothered about getting fundamental things right. A man cannot be surrealist unless he is also anti-police: A man cannot make social cinema unless he is living. The documentary film merchants live—in their publicity.

And—how long must the honest director wait between films? How much time for thinking and living?

The Vital Outlook and the Reminiscent Outlook: the aesthetic and the anaesthetic.

If art lies in selection, do they select the belches in those peasant films they show to London aristocrats on Sunday afternoons?

It's easy to be balanced on a low plane. That's why film stars are beautiful.

When an explorer pointed to a tree and asked what it was, the natives said

they didn't know. The explorer solemnly recorded it as the "I don't know tree." Somehow Eisenstein comes into this.

Perhaps there will always be painting because there will always be surfaces to deal with. And it's hard in the movies to know, when half way through, that "this would be nice to happen." No, please, it's not a question of control in the moral sense.

Art regulates behaviour: the cinema regulates trade.

"Art knows no boundaries." Indeed! what about China? And we're still waiting for a camera lens that will see things the Chinese way.

Too great a credit has been given to the intellect: we are waiting for the new age of instinct. The master—Eric von Stroheim.

To say it stands to reason presupposes a reasonable world. Of course the Hollywood films are true to life—too true to our unconscious life.

Poetry is the process wherewith one frees the thing seen from all that is not poetic. Movies are the process . . .

The bicycle and umbrella school of architecture. . . . The people in front were watching Garbo, and the intellectual behind was talking about the anti-war parade. The people in front objected; the man behind said: "The trouble with you is you're not functional . . ."

Scene: The local. The great stage actress is indulging in her first orgy of movie emotion. The small boy says: "You can see she isn't used to the lights, she blinks so much."

The old star's picture is revived. Her photo is on every poster. Where is she?

The men who died from the detonation of vast shells were found dead in natural positions. Waxwork groups with waxwork eyes. In a few months the movies get shipped to the equator picture-palace-huts.

Tuke, who made a popular success with a painting of naked lads, had to paint bathing boys for the rest of his life. There was a large family of neighbouring boys (all Greek Gods), and when one was too old to work as a model, the next was ready. Have you kept your fan papers?

Bergner—rationalised Mickey Mouse.



Maryland State Board of Motion Picture Censors

Eliminations

Page 1

May 11, 1936

Exchange: EUREKA PRODUCTIONS, INC. *Manager:* HERMAN G. WEINBERG
Address: 12, East Mount Vernon Place, Baltimore.

State No.	Title	Manufacturer
Studio A-45170	- EKSTASE (ECSTASY) (SYMPHONY OF LOVE)	EUREKA PRODUCTIONS, INC.
Reels		
1	Eliminate views of bridegroom handling boxes of condoms and close-ups of boxes of condoms on table. Eliminate views of condoms on table beside bed, and shots of camera panning from bed where bride reposes to table where condoms are lying. Eliminate all views of bride reposing full length on bed and camera panning her body from head to foot, and following scene of camera panning to legs of bridegroom sliding forward.	
2	Eliminate scene of husband taking aphrodisiac and symbol (aphrodisiac) of his impotency after wife leaves him. Eliminate scene in stable, including severance of umbilical cord and views of wet foal.	
3	Eliminate views of 'snorting pole' where stallion is shown teasing mare. Eliminate view of nude girl advancing to pool. Eliminate scene where nude girl turns over in water exposing bare breasts. Eliminate view of nude girl chasing horse. Eliminate view of nude girl beside rail exposing bare breasts.	
4	Eliminate close-up of nude girl (back view) beside rail. Eliminate close-ups of nude girl showing shame, covering herself with her hands and bowing her head as man approaches.	
4 & 5	Eliminate close-ups of girl's face and horse symbols, at points where she is visibly affected.	
5	Eliminate scenes—preparing to breed mare—views of stud book—entering names of sires and dam—and views of stallion with leather protectors on hoofs. Eliminate all cabin scenes, including scenes on couch, from point where girl first enters cabin to scene where couple are shown outside. Eliminate "key" symbol. Eliminate scene of Iris—suggestive symbol of dripping flower—at close of cabin scene.	
8	Eliminate scene of Eva with baby in her arms.	
	Film ordered to be returned for rescreening after above deletions have been made.	

The above eliminations are agreed to and have been made as ordered.

It is further agreed that all scenes and titles condemned in film will be eliminated from all Banners, Posters or other forms of advertising matter.

I hereby certify that I have personal knowledge of the facts above set forth, and that I am duly authorized to make this agreement.

Per

Print
STUDIO

Maryland State Board of Motion Picture Censors ORDER

This Board Reserves the Right to Revoke This Order

No.: A-45170

Date: May 11, 1936

Date of Censorship of Original Print: 4-14-36

Title: EKSTASE (ECSTASY) (SYMPHONY OF LOVE) SECOND ORDER ON
APPEAL

No. of Reels 8. Original: * Comedy: News: Advertising:

No. of Feet: 7,237. Duplicate: Drama: * Cartoon: Misc.:

Manufacturer: EUREKA PRODUCTIONS, INC., NEW YORK

Applicant: EUREKA PRODUCTIONS, INC., NEW YORK.

By HERMAN G. WEINBERG. Address: 12 E. MT. VERNON PLACE

ORDERED THAT THE ABOVE REELS BE APPROVED AS
ELIMINATED (SEE ATTACHED SHEET)

Received \$16.00

H. R. ODAM, Chief Clerk

BEN PAUL SANDY, Chairman

This Order Does NOT Entitle the Holder to EXHIBIT the DUPLICATE of this Film

“Film Art” Activities in Trinidad

Irene Nicholson writes from Port of Spain: “We have at last started ‘shooting’ on the film we are making for the ‘Trinidad Guardian,’ but work is bound to be spasmodic owing to uncertain weather conditions and to the fact that our nearest laboratories are in New York. We have filmed the whole sugar cane sequence, and our cast behaved wonderfully, working in conditions which most Hollywood ‘stars’ would probably refuse to contemplate. One day they were in the fields for more than twelve hours. There was heavy mud underfoot, constant downpours of rain, and no shelter excepting one car and one truck, into which some twelve of us had to squeeze. These were anyway of little use, for we were filming generally some distance from a road, and tropical rain does its damage quickly. All available mackintosh covering had to be used for the camera. Clothes dried off very quickly in the sun, however, but this in its turn was excessively hot. All the food the cast had during the whole day were some sandwiches and lime juice taken between scenes. They are all amateurs, with jobs of their own. They are giving their little spare time simply in order to help the sanatorium fund for which the film is being made. It is a good life, and Bryan Montagu and I enjoy it; but I’m amazed at the enthusiasm of those who are helping us. This enthusiasm will give their performances vitality, and if the rushes are as good as the ‘stills’ the whole cast will have done excellently. But rushes take so long to come down. New York is so far away . . . ”

AMERICA'S GOLDEN DAY

KIRK BOND

Pursuing the same general subject of old films, I should like to say something about a body of films I have lately been investigating and, in some instances, had the opportunity of seeing—which may to some degree reinforce my point on the importance of our filmic past.

Thanks primarily to the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, but also to the enterprise of a local department store, it was possible this past season to see in New York a number of pieces from the first and most interesting period of American cinema, before and during the war. About *Intolerance* this is not the place to speak, other than to say it looms greater than ever across the years, a giant of twentieth-century art. What was so fascinating and amazing was the quality of the lesser things. Mack Sennett, of course, we have always known by reputation. But he, like Melies, is actually far better than we could have supposed. All the *comedia dell'arte* effects that we have read about are there—the stock characters, Charlie, Mabel, Fatty, Ambrose, Ford, the rhythmic patterns of farce, the utter unreality—but it is done with such consummate skill and economy, such a delicate sense of timing, such completely ruthless sacrifice of individual “gags” to the ballet-like rhythm of the whole piece, that we can only gasp at the extraordinary genius of this rowdy comedian.

“*Intolerance*” aside, Griffith and Ince were together represented by only two rather ordinary Biographs—*An Arcadian Maid* and *The New York Hat*—and a two-reel Bill Hart. Even these, however, simple as they were, had an honesty and filmic beauty about them that were worth, creatively speaking, all the florid achievements of the modern photoplay.

But the test came with the feature films that were somewhere between true greatness and sheer inanity. I saw two—Frank Powell's *A Fool There Was*, with Theda Bara, and John Emerson's *In Old Heidelberg*, with Wally Reid and Dorothy Gish. Theoretically they should be nothing but curios, once good but now only fit for amusement, and to be sure audiences were immensely amused (as they were indeed at *Intolerance*). As a matter of fact, I found them very well worth seeing. It took me, I confess, two showings to get over the superficial horrors of *A Fool*, but once I had I realized the essential seriousness of the film, and the technical skill with which this was projected. For at bottom it is Griffith's morality on a lower level. Kipling's poem is the basis, and the long, melodramatic tale the illustration. It sounds faintly idiotic, but compared with the purely recreative picture of to-day, one simply cannot say that *A Fool*, with its excellent cutting and lighting, its occasional symbolism, its belief in the value of its own theme, is no more than an antiquated movie.

As for *In Old Heidelberg*, it is little enough, simply a light romance made out of the old story. I could not offer it as a work of film art. Even it, though, is done with a skill—adequate technique might express it better—that makes it still interesting and indicates the solidarity of that film world of which Griffith was the shining master. In this minor and, we may assume, typical picture, there is a technical competence that minor pictures have seldom if ever had since, and in certain war shots it possesses a beauty of composition that reminds us of Griffith.

Besides seeing these particular films, I spent some time over old volumes of the *Moving Picture World*, the principal trade journal of that day. The results bore out the evidence of the films astonishingly, if one may take as proof reading matter and a few stills. It destroyed completely the old notion that in the beginning there was Griffith—and no other. For one thing it seems altogether likely that Ince is much bigger than we had dreamed. Does anyone know to-day that *Civilization* was an allegory, a tale of Christ walking the earth in the physical likeness of the dead Count Ferdinand, Ince's reply to the challenge of *Intolerance*, so to speak. Then there were the Japanese films, *The Typhoon* and *The Wrath of the Gods*, the stills of the latter filled with steam and shadow, and the best Harts, the early *Italian*, and another moral play, the scene partly in Hell, *The Devil*. It seems even possible that the French in their enthusiasm for the sensibility, the lyricism, the élan of "Thos. Ince" were after all only stating facts.

Nor was Ince alone with Griffith. There was De Mille and Powell and George Loan Tucker and Stuart Blackton and Gordon Edwards—and all putting into their films some idea, moral or dramatic, some original value that was their own. Perhaps a great deal of this will be found on examination to be dead wood; the age after all was far from ideal. But no one can tell by guessing, and it is certain that these men were making some genuine effort, in their serious work, to use the new medium, not as a phonograph for dramatists, but as an artistic vehicle in its own right. And backing them up were the trade critics, who would put to shame most press critics to-day. They went so far as to find in Griffith those philosophic convictions which the present age is only now rediscovering. They took it for granted that a serious film should say something of artistic or dramatic significance.

In after years when the spirit of this happy and productive period disappeared beneath the waves of the jazz era, the almighty star, and Hollywood industrialization, the achievements it made, with a very few exceptions, were forgotten too. Even from the standard histories you would not gather that they had ever existed. Yet here they are, good films, ambitious films, in some instances at least very moving films, and the implication is that nearly all are valuable and that primitive American cinema is one of the great periods of film history, ranking with the post-war German and the early Russian. It is at all events a fascinating period, if only because we still know so comparatively little about it.

FILMS OF THE QUARTER

AMERICAN FILM SEASON

The three most interesting new American films at this writing are *One Rainy Afternoon*, *The Great Ziegfeld* and *The King Steps Out*. (I presume that London has already seen *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*, Frank Capra's most recent excursion into his individual brand of whimsy and sociology, in which the wily Italian director strives for the second or third time, now, to capture something of the spontaneous charm of the now memorable *It Happened One Night*.)

One Rainy Afternoon is interesting chiefly because it tries to recapture the frothy type of sex-comedy with which such as Malcolm St. Clair and Harry d'Arrast were once associated, in the days before movies began to talk. It is, of course, not successful in this respect, since only Lubitsch has retained the magic formula for this delightful sort of thing (witness his *Trouble in Paradise*, which even sound and dialogue did not slow up) and Rowland V. Lee has not the divine afflatus to touch off the spark, which is there, but which never bursts into flame. However, it is agreeable, with a Rene Clair rain, a properly demure heroine (Ida Lupino) who blushes maidenly, a gay young man without money (Francis Lederer) and quite the drollest of dizz-bangs in Hugh Herbert. The three are scrambled in a mad plot that takes pokes at French red-tape, judges, law procedure and the dignity of the republic generally. Though it misses fire, it manages to be good fun.

The Great Ziegfeld, on the other hand, takes itself much more seriously, and while glorifying the American girl manages to glorify Ziegfeld in a way that makes an idol of a man who was insanely extravagant, not a little arrogant and who was, perhaps, the shrewdest of the leg-show entrepreneurs of the twentieth century in New York. That which raised Ziegfeld above the level of his colleagues was the man's innate good taste, his Jewish-Oriental voluptuousness as manifested in the sumptuousness of his productions, and his discovery of some of the outstanding theatrical talent of our day. William Powell plays Ziegfeld ingratiatingly enough, but it is Luise Rainer, again, who steals the acting honours of the show with her really touching portrayal of the glamorous Anna Held. In a smaller part, Virginia Bruce sparkles as the chorus girl who was always tight—an intelligent and insidious bit of portraiture that deserves more attention than it got. Metro shot the works on this picture, said works being Louis B. Mayer's bankroll. It is reputed to have cost two million dollars and every dollar of it is visible on the screen. Some of the sets are fabulous dreams out of the Arabian Nights. Robert Z. Leonard has directed its three hours of running time with the professional slickness which has characterized the work of this sure-fire *regisseur*, and the result is a sleek, glossy example of Hollywood at its peak, not of sophistication, to be sure, but of something or other that only two million dollars could achieve.

The King Steps Out is interesting only because it is the latest work of Josef von Sternberg, who, heretofore, has been dedicated to Marlene Dietrich and the cause of the *femme fatale*. The metamorphosis of Fritz Kreisler's fragile operetta, *Cissy*, to the Columbia production of *The King Steps Out* is apparent at once in the wide disparity of the two titles. A view of the film discloses not a touch of the exotic individuality of its director, manifested so surely in his previous films. It is fast, straightforward and to the point, with that hard matter-of-factness that robs its plot of the charm it once had. Grace

Moore is not *Cissy* any more than Franchot Tone is *Franz Josef*, and only occasional stray bits of Kreisler's gay and heady music and some hilarious moments by Herman Bing prevent the film from being a total loss. Wilhelm Thiele, who knows more about musical films than anyone else excepting, perhaps, Clair, Berger and Lubitsch, is listed as "assistant director." That a man like Thiele (who directed the brilliant *Drei von der Tankstelle*) should be assistant to anyone on a musical film is not to be countenanced. In this instance their roles should have been reversed. Not that I think Sternberg is incapable, but the economic leash has tamed many a fierce lion, and I hope it has not done that to the most original of our current directors.

HERMAN G. WEINBERG.

"FURY"

The legion of admirers of the work of Fritz Lang need have no fears. The director of "*M*" has not "gone Hollywood," or rather, he has gone Hollywood in a fashion to shame our native directorate, for *Fury*, Herr Lang's first American film, is by all odds the most brilliantly conceived and executed sociological drama in many moons of assorted screen junk. A savage indictment of American lynch law—that species of insane mob rule that has burned or hung more than six thousand victims during the past forty-nine years in this "enlightened" country—*Fury* sears itself into the conscience of the beholder exactly as the damning testimony during the trial of the lynchers burned a confession out of the screaming woman among them.

That a foreign director had to expose this shameful condition to us is but the first irony. That he has done it with so acute a psychological insight into the workings of the small town American mind is both first and last miracle. *Fury* shows up the trivia with which the rest of our directors have been wasting our time. Try to imagine any of our current directors turning out an "*M*" and you will realize the miracle Fritz Lang has accomplished.

Norman Krasna's bitter dialogue tumbles and cascades along the violent continuity that Herr Lang has made of his unswerving stream of image-strengthening light. Subtle and insistent, the camera in Lang's hands becomes an appalling and terrifying thing that tortures the beholder for the truth it tries to seek out. *Fury* looks like a collaboration between Georg Grosz and Eisenstein. It is a good film for an exile to have made.

Production: Metro-Goldwyn.
Direction: Fritz Lang.

Dialogue: Norman Krasna.
With: Spencer Tracey and Sylvia Sydney.

HERMAN G. WEINBERG.

"NEXT TIME WE LIVE"

There are those who wallow in the usual stuff of cinema, and those who are sickened by it. The former will be puzzled by this film, the latter refreshed. For the tragedy is stated so casually that its full understanding makes some slight demands on the imagination. The film, it would appear, was actually designed for an intelligent, adult audience.

The reason for its notice here is not any great degree of intrinsic merit, but because it is such a pleasant surprise to find the quality of restraint, and also, to some degree, the subtlety of real life, in a Hollywood production.

GEO. I. M. BARTLETT.

"UNDERGROUND PRINTER"

"All sound and music for the dance must, I believe, arise out of the dancers, in the process of the dance." So spoke John Bovington, male dancer, in New York in 1934. The film that has been made of one of his series of "Portraits of a Changing World"—*Underground Printer*—is the first attempt at a pure dance film, unaccompanied, save by the incantations of the dancer. Thus, it comes as close to an example of the pure sound film as we have had. Mr. Bovington's method is unique and highly personal, but withal opening a new field for an exciting branch of the dance-form. Lewis Jacobs has taken the grotesque movements and broken them up into their essences—mounting his sound and image with percussion shocks, throwing in startling relief the gyrations of the dancer as he spins and whirls as Goebbels, explodes as Goering, and exults as the Communist underground printer preparing his anti-Nazi leaflets. The film is an excellent one for the various film societies and clubs throughout England and the Continent, being representative of what the advance-guard of young cinéasts are doing in America.

Production: B. & B. Productions.

Direction: Thomas Bouchard.

Choreography: John Bovington.

Photography: Lewis Jacobs.

Art Direction: G. Federoff, E. Katz.

Edited by: L. Jacobs, E. Katz.

First presented at The Town Hall, New York, 29th April, 1936.

HERMAN G. WEINBERG.

EDITORIAL NOTE:

Lewis Jacobs writes us: "As far as I know *Underground Printer* is the first professional dance film, an unexplored field, as provocative to dancers as to film directors. It occurs to me that the many art cinemas in England would be interested."

The new Denham studios of London Films are now finished. Designed by Jack Oakey, the American studio expert, they contain everything and more; air conditioning, private electricity and water stations, and complete film processing plant. It has been left with the G.P.O. to deal with the avalanche that has overwhelmed the local telephone exchange. Oakey has returned to the U.S.A. Now it is up to London Films to make the ends justify the means.

Kino Films have been producing some sub-standard films, notably *Malnutrition*, *To-morrow and To-morrow*, and *Speed Up*, the latter being an industrial documentary. Housing, Work Schemes, Public Works and Social Services are some of the subjects now under discussion by the Production and Scenario Committees. These committees will advise upon any scenario that may be submitted to them by independent groups.

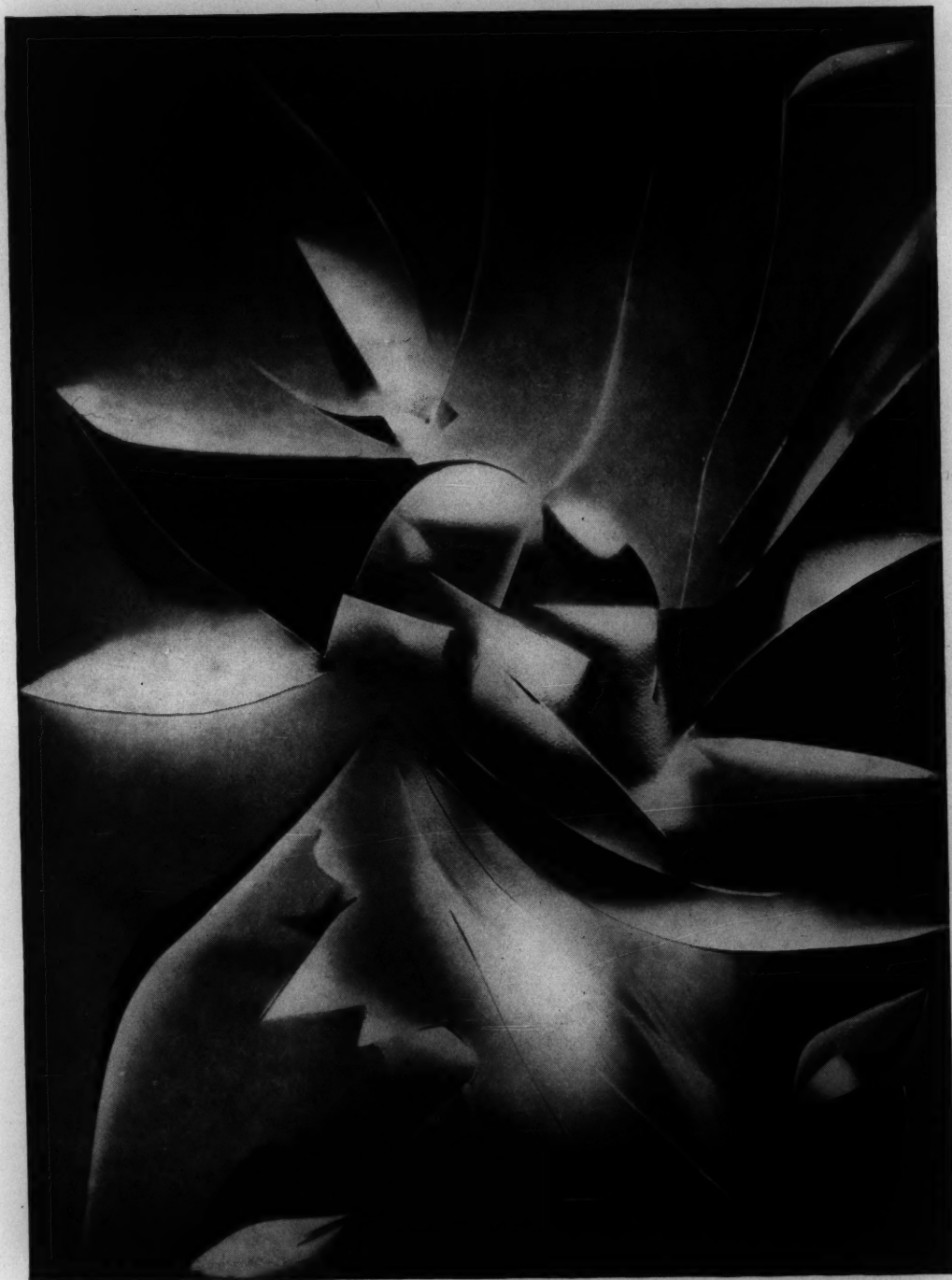
As early as December 1931, *Close-Up* mentioned (on page 333) a French film by Roger Livet, with the provisional title *La Mort d'un Ruisseau*. This picture has now been completed and sound has been added. It will shortly be released under the title *Le Quai—A Paris dans le IVe Arrondissement*. Monsieur Livet informs us that British Film Societies were interested in the production, and he therefore should like to hear from the secretaries. His address is: 12 Avenue Gambetta, Paris 20e.

[This photo by Francis Bruguière, and the one overleaf, complete the series that have appeared in "film art" Nos. 3, 4, and 5. They are illustrations from a little known book* by Francis Bruguière and Oswald Blakeston which appeared in a small and strictly limited edition.]

The importance of Bruguière's light photos for the cinéaste is that they show how emotions, characters or scenes can be created entirely with light. Fantasy, in film programmes to-day, is mostly confined to cartoon work. Some of us, perhaps, are becoming a little blasé about cartoons. The short fantasy film, created with characters in moving light, would be a novelty for the box-office and the history of cinema.—O.B.



* *Few Are Chosen*. Out of print, but can still be obtained from Charles Lahr, 68 Red Lion Street, London, W.C.1.



BOOKS OF THE QUARTER AT THE FOOT OF THE RAINBOW

"COLOUR CINEMATOGRAPHY." A. B. Klein. (*Chapman and Hall*. 25s.)

This book is to be ranked with the classic works of Wall. The author, a well-known worker on colour processes for many years, is now technical director of Gasparcolor. His experience has resulted in a work that co-ordinates a vast amount of information with a framework of basic principle. The main contents of the book are an historical summary, an exposition of basic principles, detailed descriptions of practically all system that have reached the dignity of projection and the associated apparatus, a chapter on the problems of colour synthesis and analysis, and a discussion of the peculiarities of colour vision and their application to the colour film. There are numerous references, and good illustrations. The latter are in black and white, but the publisher has ingeniously incorporated the photographic primary colours in the binding.

Much of this book can be enjoyed without special knowledge, though the specialist will reap the full benefit. Occasionally the exposition is so painstaking as to be clumsy. The chapter on the problems of colour analysis would be clearer for an explicit statement of the fundamental difficulty, which is that the three colour sensations of the eye do not correspond to physical hues, and therefore cannot be stimulated independently by colour filters.

More crocks of gold have been lost in the search for the rainbow than will ever be found at the foot of it. Major Klein reckons the amount as between three and five millions, some lost through legislation, but most through what he rightly calls "an apparently wilful disregard of elementary optical laws." Even the three main systems of to-day, to wit, the subtractive processes of Gasparcolor and Technicolor, and the additive colour mosaic of Spicer-Dufay, have developed by reason only of continuous and expensive work on details.

The historical summary traces this development from the time of Newton onwards. Due homage is paid to the anachronistic genius of Ducos du Hauron, who, in 1862, laid down the principles of all systems used since, with one exception. Mention of this exception, the Lippman process (1891), is strangely omitted by Klein. One of the most beautiful of human inventions, it is unique in giving the actual wave lengths of the original colour. Since the author deals with colour cinematography, and not coloured films, he cannot be blamed for omitting the handcut stencils by which Pathé gave atrocious colouring to travelogues, and which were used sometimes to add extra garments where the Censor deemed it necessary. (He forgot that the colours were transparent!) However, passing reference is made to Handschiegl, who showed always a leaning towards handwork. The reviewer, a hardened heretic, has always believed that when photography has become the servant of the film the future will lie with Lippman and Handschiegl. (Consider the synthetic blushes in comedies; the gold in *Greed* and *Trail of '98*; the Red Flag in the final scene of *Potemkin*.)

The attention of film theorists is called to the space devoted by Major Klein to the basis of the cinema, that is, the human eye. No theory that ignores the phenomena of vision is sound, except by accident. How many exponents of what is libellously called "Russian cutting" have noticed that the very existence of the cinema depends on the physiological impossibility of "single frame cutting" and the like? The fundamental science of the film is neither philosophy nor photography, but physiology.

Why should so much effort be expended on the search for "natural colour" photography, when all major works of art use an extraordinarily restricted palette? Klein argues that the realism of moving photographs emphasizes departures from realism in the colouring, which must be accurate or absent. This is the view of Arnheim also.

At no time does the author confuse the means with the end, he deplores the habit of producers of using colour film to give an effect like an explosion in a paint factory. "The first colour film to be received with universal acclamation," he says, "will be that one in which we shall never have been conscious of the colour as an achievement." He states, however, that film producers are the last to exercise restraint. He gives good reasons for doubting the immediate possibility of a large increase in the number of colour films, one being that while the cost of sound was borne by the theatres, the cost of colour must be borne by the studios.

A book of permanent value to the practical worker and others.

R. A. FAIRTHORNE.

"THE ART OF FILM PRODUCTION," by Andrew Buchanan (*Pitmans*, 5s.)

Mr. Buchanan is much more than a mere newsreel editor. He has done much to clarify the position of the news film and in a modest way has shown the sponsors the road they must ultimately travel to present news intelligently and artistically.

Mr. Buchanan looks at the cinema from a newsreel point of view, and consequently feels much more at home when dealing with his own particular subject than with the industry as a whole.

Of late years it has increasingly become a habit to dissect the cinema and analyse its potentialities by theories and dogmas. Mr. Buchanan is far too much an individual spirit to dogmatise—moreover, some of his theories do not ring true.

The Art of Film Production is obviously the work of an independent and original mind, and proof of the writer's exceptional capacity to marshal his data and express his views and conclusions with much lucidity. The book also testifies that Mr. Buchanan possesses immense industry, concentration and judgment in cinema investigation.

Many of the chapters are reprints from articles that have appeared in *FILM ART* in the course of the last few years.

JOHN C. MOORE.

THREE LINK HOUSE PUBLICATIONS at 2s. each

Link House Publications Ltd. have been good enough to send us three booklets for amateur film producers entitled *Trick Effects* (H. A. V. Bulleid), *Exposing Cine Film* (P. C. Smethurst) and *Cine Titling Simplified* (Harold B. Abbott). These have been on the market for some time and have been well received. Amateurs, who appreciated Alex. Strasser's *Amateur Films*, from the same publishers, reviewed in our last issue, will undoubtedly benefit from the perusal of these works.

"STAR TURN," by René Clair (*Chatto & Windus*, 7s. 6d.)

Some years ago René Clair wrote a book under the title *Adam* which has now been translated from the French as *Star Turn* by John Marks.

As a story it is too loosely knit to be of literary value, but here and there (especially in "Seven Characters in Search of Love") the typical Clair touch is present.

Although interesting as an experiment, Mr. Clair appears more at home in his own sphere, the cinema.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE EDITORS

In FILM ART No. 8 there appeared an article by Mr. Terence White on the relations between Film and Ballet, in which he attempted to outline the ways in which Film and Ballet could aid each other, or "mix." However, in my view, he does not discuss this question of "combining," as distinct from mixing," as he promises to do before his main discourse, when he asks himself "How will they combine?" To me, how they will combine is a much more interesting question than how they will mix: When two arts "mix" the result is usually "sensational." . . . When they combine they create . . . a new art!

It is the shape of this new art to be created out of Ballet and Film that I wish to discuss; or rather, the shape I think and hope it will take.

What are the characteristics of Ballet? First . . . Motion; perhaps we should say the "poetry of motion."

Lotte Reiniger tells us that "Film is motion" . . . perhaps she doesn't mean quite the same thing . . . however, it is encouraging. Next . . . Music . . . very well . . . and Colour . . . that's debatable, but we'll accept it.

Here, then, we have the main essentials of ballet. What has film to offer? As Mr. White pointed out, it has a great nimbleness. It has also the power of taking unto itself almost any shade of colour or combination of colours, and giving them a greater brilliance. And, of course, it can reproduce with varying success almost any sound or note or tone audible to the human ear. These then are the ingredients. What of the cake? My Ballet Film will be produced in a cinema by means of a projector. Mr. Len Lye in "Colour Box" has come nearer to my conception than anything within my experience. . . . Rhythm is the keynote of "Colour Box" . . . poetry of motion would be the keynote of my Ballet Film. Mr. Lye, I believe, draws his colours on to the celluloid: the Ballet Film of the future will probably be drawn by the cartoon action method employed by Walt Disney. The patterns will be ABSTRACT, FORMALISED figures: all the stock-in-trade of the surrealist painter . . . and some new ones.

The subject and the artist will determine the manner; and just as to-day Painting is in a turmoil of petty quibbling, so the Ballet Film of the future will be the happy hunting ground of the æsthetic experimenter.

I look forward to the day when I shall see a Ballet Film which is the joint work of a Picasso, a Borodin, a Diaghilev . . . or this may not be. . . .!! Maybe there will appear a "race of Ballet-Artists who will compose . . . and paint . . . who think in terms of Colour . . . Sound . . . Motion.

RALPH AYRES, *Didcot, Berks.*

The actual movements of the air have been made visible in a remarkable film by Dr. Townend, of the National Physical Laboratory, Teddington. He has used the principle that makes visible the hot air rising from the radiator of a motor car, and applied it to show the flow of air round the various parts of aircraft. His early experiments in this type of cinematography were mentioned in FILM ART No. 5.* The film is not publicly available, but has been used by the Air Ministry for instruction. It is described and illustrated in the (American) *Journal of Aeronautical Sciences*, August 1936. A member of our staff, who has seen the film, states that it is, apart from its scientific interest, very beautiful.

* Winter 1934. p. 22. Report on Films shown at the 4th International Congress of Applied Mechanics at Cambridge.

FILM SOCIETIES

(The Editors shall be pleased to receive particulars from the Secretaries for inclusion in this list)

THE FILM SOCIETY, LONDON.

The Council of the Film Society regrets to inform members that Miss Mary Brown has resigned the secretaryship of the Society owing to ill-health. The appointment of Miss Barbara Frey to succeed Miss Brown has only recently been made. For this reason the arrangements for the coming season have been delayed and the opening will take place rather later than in past years.

NORTH LONDON FILM SOCIETY.

Third season to be held at the Monseigneur Cinema, Charing Cross, Trafalgar Square, commencing October 25. Films to be shown during 1936-7 will include: *The New Gulliver*, *A Simple Case*, *Die Dreigroschenoper*, *Gosta Berling*, *L'Atalante*, *Nanook of the North*, etc. In conjunction with the film performances a series of lectures on various aspects of Film has been arranged, and speakers will include Robert Flaherty, Arthur Elton and Alistair Cooke. Secretary: Mr. H. A. Green, 8 King's Road, London, N.4. FILM ART can be obtained at the lectures.

OXFORD FILM SOCIETY.

Performances will be held at the Scala Cinema, Oxford, on alternate Sunday evenings at 8 p.m. Programme for the Society's first season will be selected from: *Deserter*, *Ekstase*, *Die Ewige Maske*, *Reifende Jugend*, *October*, *Dood Water*, *Chapaev*, etc. First performance October 18th with *Potemkin*, *B.B.C.—The Voice of Britain* and *Joie de Vivre* 1st November: *Le Loup Garou*; 15th November: *Bonne Chance*; 29th November: *Marchand d'Amour*; 13th December: *Blackmail*. Secretary: Mr. E. F. Bowtell, 105 Victoria Road, Oxford. It is hoped to open a bookstall at the cinema, where members may obtain periodicals, and copies of FILM ART will be on sale.

FILM SOCIETY OF AYRSHIRE, KILMARNOCK.

The first meeting was held on 4th October, when *Hey Rup*, *Black Magic* and *Pal's Ali Baba* were shown. At the second meeting it is hoped to present either "M" or *Das Maedchen Johanna*. The season's programme will be selected from the following: *Remous*, *Merlusse*, *Zero de Conduite*, *Refugees*, *Three Songs of Lenin*, etc. Secretary: Mr. J. A. Paton Walker, 5 St. Marnock Street, Kilmarnock. FILM ART is on sale.

WOLVERHAMPTON FILM SOCIETY.

The Society meets at the West End Cinema, Coleman Street, Whitmore Reans, Wolverhampton, and seven monthly shows will be presented on Wednesdays at 8 p.m. The first performance was held on October 7th with *Don Quixote* and *Wings Over Everest*. Film to be shown include: *Thunder Over Mexico*, *Earth*, *Front Page*, *White Hell of Pitz Palu*, etc. Hon. Programme Secretary: Mr. E. L. Packer, Himley Crescent, Goldthorn Park, Wolverhampton. FILM ART is on sale.

TYNESIDE FILM SOCIETY, NEWCASTLE.

First performance was held on October 11th at the Haymarket Theatre, Barras Bridge, and the *Student of Prague*, *Night Mail* and *The Birth of a Robot* were presented. Future performances will be held on 1st and 22nd November and 13th December, and *En Natt*, *Bonne Chance* and *Episode* will be shown. Secretary: Miss Dorothy Bradley, 4 Ford Crescent, Primrose, Jarrow.

MANCHESTER & SALFORD WORKERS' FILM SOCIETY, SALFORD.

The Society meets at the Rivoli Cinema, Denmark Road, Rusholme, on Sundays at 7.30, and at the first performance on 20th September *Jazz Comedy* and *Ship of the Ether* were shown. Next meetings are 18th October and 13th December, when the programme will include *World War and After* and *Der Hauptman von Koepenick*. It is also hoped to show *Bed and Sofa* and *The Deserter* during the season. Secretary: 86 Hulton Street, Salford, 5.

THE WHITEHALL CINE SOCIETY (President: John Grierson; Chairman: Harry Walden; Hon. Secretary: O. Kordik, India Office, S.W.1) is the first Society to initiate a circulation scheme in order that its provincial members may see and criticise each other's films. Particulars of the scheme, which is open to all Civil Servants who may be interested, can be obtained from the Provincial Secretary: Mr. T. I. Williams, H.M. Inspector of Taxes, Post Office Buildings, Accrington, Lancs.

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By MAJOR ADRIAN BERNARD KLEIN, M.B.E., A.R.P.S.

Technical Director of Gasparcolor Ltd.

This is probably the first book dealing exclusively with colour cinematography, and it should fill a long-felt gap in the literature of photography; in the past the enquirer having been much hampered by the necessity of consulting numberless technical journals, obscure periodicals, or chapters in rare books. Moreover, in view of the misconceptions which are all too common among those in the industry it has become quite an urgent matter that a book containing the required information should be made available without further delay.

CONTENTS: Preface. Historical Summary. Part 1: Theoretical Basis. Additive Processes. Subtractive Processes. Colour-Cameras and Beam-Splitting Systems. Bipack. Part 2: Analysis and Synthesis Problems. The Phenomena of Colour Vision and the making of Films in Colour. Appendices: Lenses employed in the Technicolor Process of Cinematography, by H. W. Lee. A Glossary of Colour Photography. The Klein Tricolour Camera. The Harmonicolor Process. Index.

"An interesting and valuable summary of the whole theory and practice of colour cinematography. Beginning with a historical summary, it proceeds to a discussion of fundamental theory and various existing processes and equipment. Lucidly written, its value is enhanced by a large number of photographs and diagram illustrations, and a glossary of technical terms."—THE CINEMA.

"Discussion of the finer points of film-making seems so easily to degenerate into the fabrication of airy pseudo-aesthetic theories that a book like the present one, written with authority by someone who thoroughly understands his subject, is as refreshing as it is timely, as timely as it is rare. Major Klein, of Gasparcolor, is the best kind of 'practical' man, the technical expert who is able to interrelate satisfactorily the different spheres of his knowledge; and one is exceedingly grateful to him for incidentally laying stress on an aspect of film-development too often ignored—its aspect as the gradual solution of a complex and remarkably fascinating problem in applied science."—THE LISTENER.

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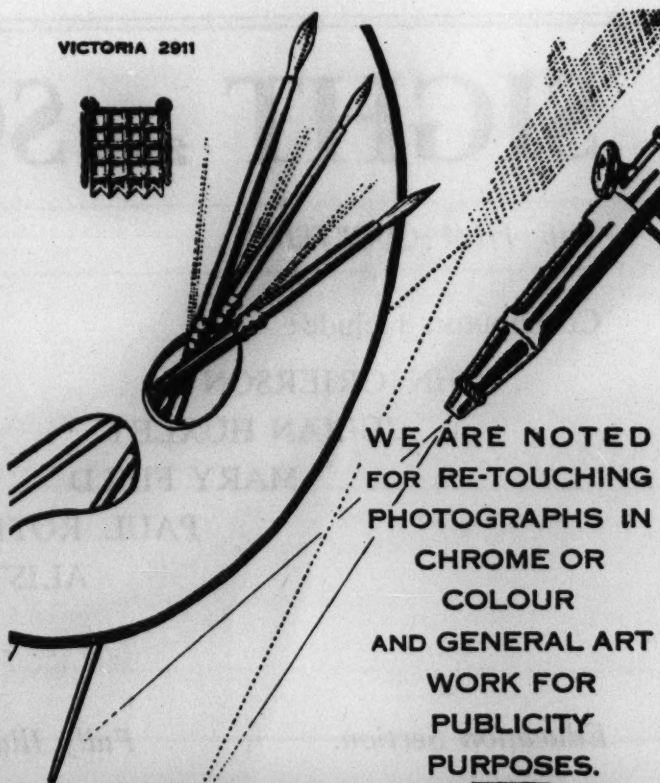
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